



CONGRESSMAN HENRY A. WAXMAN NEWS

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Washington Report
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Congressman, 24th C.D.

WAXMAN IN KISHINEV APPEALS FOR HELP

I routinely review cases of Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate to Israel and the United States. Cases are brought to my attention by organizations such as the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry, and Jewish Federation Council, both in Los Angeles and in other cities. One case which recently came to my attention made a particularly strong impression.

I have substantial reason to believe that David Gregoriovich Vaksman is a relative of mine. The Waxman side of my family comes from the city of Kishinev -- where David resides. Though several Waxmans emigrated to the United States and Canada early in this century, a considerable portion of the family remained behind.

David Vaksman's case is not an unusual one. He has been denied an exit visa on the grounds that he possesses "State secrets". The Russians contend that he acquired these "secrets" through his routine Army service almost ten years ago. I have circulated a letter on David's behalf among my Congressional colleagues. I am also making efforts to contact David directly.

Of course, we are ultimately all relatives, and must all take responsibility for each other. Yet, emotionally the possibility of actual close kinship with a refusenik has had a profound effect on me. It is so very easy for me to imagine myself as a refusenik from Kishinev rather than a Congressman from the United States -- if family migration patterns had just been slightly different.

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From what I have been able to learn so far, David Vaksman is not political or a religious leader, but, rather, is simply an individual seeking a freer life. David is thirty years old, and works as an electrician. He began his efforts to obtain an exit visa in September of 1973. We do not know whether or not his parents and brother with whom he lives have also sought permission to leave.

Unfortunately, I must end this article on a negative note. The number of Jews being allowed to leave the Soviet Union is at the lowest point it has been since the current mass migration began. Right now it seems unlikely that the final 1981 figure will reach the 10,000 mark. Yet, in 1979, over 50,000 Jews were allowed to leave. No one is certain about the factors which have resulted in the dramatic shift in Soviet policy. I do know the odds are against David Gregoriovich Vaksman -- a young man in the prime of his life seeking nothing more than what most of us have and too often take for granted -- personal liberty and economic opportunity.

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